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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

7 December 1956

Staff Memo No. 93-56

Subject: : Revision of Format for Annual Soviet Estimate

Reference: Staff Memo No. 61-56, 10 August and Supplement, 14 August.

1. The Board has still to make a recommendation and the IAC a decision with respect to the form which the 1957 version of the Soviet estimate should take. This should be done shortly in order to have a proper listing of Soviet papers in the new Quarterly Estimates Program and to permit the Staff to proceed with terms of reference in January.

2. The suggestion that the comprehensive type of paper be broken up into three or more smaller ones arose because of the prolonged coordination process required for NIE 11-4-56. The problem of how to divide the ground covered and how to schedule the separate pieces was the stumbling block in the Board's previous consideration of the subject. The staff feels that three or more separate papers scheduled in succession would not reduce the time and effort required by the single paper, and that there would be some loss of coherence between the separate aspects treated. This would

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be particularly the case if the scheduling of four separate papers proposed by State were adopted. (See Supplement to Staff Memo 61-56 of 14 August.)

3. The principal delays in producing NIE 11-4-56 arose from certain knotty questions in the military field. It might be useful as an experiment to break out the military section and to produce it during June as Part I of the annual exercise. Part II could then contain sections on Internal Political Developments, Economic Developments, and Soviet Foreign Policy. There would be an advantage in producing this later in the year, perhaps in October-November, so as to have a fresh paper before the NSC at the time of its annual policy review.

4. The alternatives among which a choice should be made are thus the following:

- a. Retain the present comprehensive format.
- b. Break into two parts with separate treatment of Soviet military strengths and strategy as suggested in Para. 3 above.
- c. Break into three parts - economic, military, political - as suggested in SM 61-56 of 10 August.
- d. Break into four parts as suggested in State proposal in SM 61-56 Supplement of 14 August.

There are considerations pro and con applying to all these alternatives with which the Board is sufficiently familiar. On balance, the staff view is that we should have a try with the formula under b above.

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